1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33) 1936 SR9 Carib SR9

patina of the outer surface scraped off in places to produce a brown-on-white design.

Women usually have a small perforation in the middle of the lower integumental lip in which a common brass pin or a thorn is inserted with its point outward. The natives consider this practice more a matter of convenience than of ornamentation. The pin or thorn is removed for use whenever the owner needs a sharp point.

There is thus very little formalization in the pendants, necklaces, bracelets, armlets, fillets, and ligatures worn by the Caribs. So far as I was able to discover, none of these ornaments possess any extraneous significance which would indicate that they are regarded as fetishes or amulets.

In preparation for a dance or drinking spree both the men and women sometimes decorate their foreheads with the white underdown of the powis (Plates 11, *b* and 13, *a*). This ornamentation has been described by Mr. A. Hyatt Verrill as the "Carib tribal mark."[1] At the present time, this symbol is not used as a self-conscious designation of tribal membership by the Barama Caribs. It is worn only at sprees, at which times foreigners as a rule are absent, and at present can be considered functionally only as a type of festive ornamentation. Wild honey is spread on the forehead, and into this natural adhesive the white down feathers are stuck so that a thick fluff covers the forehead. Even its use at sprees is not invariable.

On festive occasions the women always paint their faces. The onto fruit is made into a paste and colored red with ruku (*Bixa orellana*). Different shades of red and black are made by adding lamp black to the paste, which is kept in a hollow section of dried bamboo and applied with the frayed end of a twig. Several designs are in use. Informants consistently stated that, although these designs had religious significance in the past, they were purely decorative at present.

Both sexes sometimes decorate their hair with flowers and feathers on festive occasions. The arrangement of these ornaments is quite casual, and their use is not an invariable part of the toilet.

Women usually wear their hair parted in the middle with either one or two braids hanging down the back. When the woman is at

[1] Verrill, 1917, *Tribal Relationship of the Akawoias.*

1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33)1936 SR9 Carib SR9

524 trays (as described by Roth).[1] Tops of the humming or singing
857 variety are unknown on the Barama. Children of both sexes amuse themselves with making figures of string on their fingers. I have simply noted this fact without attempting to investigate the patterns followed, inasmuch as Roth has treated the subject of string figures rather exhaustively.[2]

A game which one is surprised to encounter in this region is the hoop and stick game, played by small children. The game is called onambatoba tonomi. The stick is called wiwimi, and the hoop tondori. A hoop about a foot in diameter is rolled along the ground by one player while the opponent attempts from a given distance to cast a slender lance-like stick, three or four feet long, through the hoop without touching it. The players alternate in throwing the stick and rolling the hoop.

Children also play with stilts. Each stilt is made of one piece of wood with the footrest not more than a foot above the ground. It is a question as to whether or not stilts have been introduced by outsiders.

● 527 The social occasion par excellence for young and old alike is the drinking spree. This affair takes place when a newly married couple moves into their house, when a house has been newly completed, when distinguished visitors come to the settlement, and otherwise as frequently as the supply of cassava and other field products will permit the manufacture of drink. During the months of December and January the cassava is most plentiful, and it is during this period that the sprees are held most frequently. In-
[797] dians on the lower river who have come in contact with missionaries connect this period in a vague way with the word "Kissmuss" (Christmas), but the coincidence of dates is apparently purely accidental.

A spree is always given by an individual family, of which the members act as hosts. Invitations are sent out to others of the settlement and frequently to relatives and friends in other settlements. Travelers are usually informed of the date of an impending spree on their line of march, and spare no effort to arrive in time. Once he has started "spreeing" nothing will persuade an Indian to leave until the drink is exhausted. Boat hands working for me

[1] Roth, 1924, *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs*, p. 496.
[2] Roth, 1924, *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs*, Chap. 24.

1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33) 1936 SR9 Carib SR9

who have been confined to their hammocks with fever of several degrees, upon being invited to a spree, have been known to leap from their sickbeds and perform the most arduous labor in order to get the party to the drinking bout on time. At one time I was without supplies for ten days because the men who had been sent down river to fetch them had joined a spree at an intervening settlement.

For several days before the social event the women of the entertaining family have been busy preparing the drink. Cassiri and paiwari are the two most popular alcoholic drinks. Cassiri is made according to the following recipe. The cassava is grated and squeezed and placed in a large pot with water. In the meantime, some thin cassava cakes are baked and allowed to become hard. These are chewed and spit into the pot. Sometimes, though not always, cane juice is added in the proportions of about a pint to a gallon of cassiri. The mixture is then placed in the cassiri kanu and allowed to "set" for from one to three days, at the end of which time it has a slight "bead" and the alcoholic content of weak beer.

Paiwari (paiawaru) is made as follows. The cassava meal is formed in thin cakes, which are baked until they are brown on both sides and toasted all the way through. Some of the cakes are then broken up into small bits and placed in a pot which is filled with water. Other cakes are chewed and spit into the pot in the same way as in the making of cassiri. Sometimes, though not always, cane juice is added. The mixture is then placed in the cassiri kanu to set. Paiwari has a cereal taste due to the toasted cassava bread, which is different from the taste of cassiri. To one who had at sometime or another soaked rye toast in weak beer, the taste of paiwari would not be unfamiliar. Both paiwari and cassiri are usually colored by grating a red potato into a mixture before it is set.

Unfermented cassiri, a supply of which is usually on hand in each house, is taken as an early morning pick-me-up the year around upon rising.

Alcoholic drinks are also made from fermented cane juice, pineapple juice, and field corn. Due to the fact that supplies of the raw materials of these drinks are scarcer, they are seldom used at sprees, but are kept for home consumption.

1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33)1936 SR9 Carib SR9

527 The guests, attired in their best ornaments, face paint, and raiment, usually arrive shortly after dawn of the first day of the spree. Before it is light someone has started beating rhythms on the sambura, or drum, and playing tunes on a fiddle. During the morning the men and boys gather in one end of the house telling stories and amusing each other with conversation while they drink. They lie about in hammocks smoking, eating, talking, and playing with such musical instruments as may be present (Plate 23, *a* and *b*). In the afternoon the dance usually begins and lasts until late in the evening. The dancing takes place in the house or in an open space outside the house.

527 The general rules of etiquette at a drinking spree are as follows.
576 The aged people stay by themselves, it being beneath their dignity and capacity to indulge fully in the sport of the young. Women do not drink with men. The lady of the house, most often the wife of the house owner, serves the drink to the guests in person. Usually a large calabash, holding two or three quarts and hemispherical in shape, is filled from the kanu. In it are floating several small calabashes. The hostess fills one of these smaller calabashes and hands it to each guest. Specially honored guests are presented with the large calabash full of drink at each serving. One must always take the first drink from the calabash which is served to him, but if he does not desire the full contents, it is polite to pass it to someone else who will drink all but a small residue, which the
[832] original recipient must finish. Sharing one's drink with a woman is a way of showing that one regards her as attractive. It is impolite for anyone but the original recipient of the calabash to return it to the hostess, and he must return it empty.

534 No particular name is applied to the dance which accompanies a spree. (Wano, to dance.) Music is usually supplied by two men who beat samburas, or wooden drums with double heads of akuri skin, (Plates 23, *a*, and 24, *a*) and one or more men with fiddles. The latter may be of European design, bought from a shop, or may be made from bamboo stems or congo pumps. Both types
[467] are strung with three cotton threads and played with a yarriyarri bow strung with kraua twine. Anyone of the male sex can play the drum or fiddle, although most settlements have certain
535 individuals who are especially proficient. Usually an old woman
527 and several little girls begin the dancing, which is always in line

1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33) 1936 SR9 Carib SR9

(Plate 24, *b*). The individuals of the line of dancers are joined by placing their arms around each other's shoulders and waists. Later the younger women join the line of dancers. The women then snatch men from their hammocks or seats and force them to dance amid great hilarity. At the start of the dance a step is used which consists of swinging the right foot forward and bringing it back beside the other foot while the opposite leg bends slightly at the knee. The figure is then repeated on the opposite side. As the dancing becomes more abandoned the step consists simply of walking forward and backward in unison. There may be two or more lines of dancers, who at all times attempt to face the musicians. The latter, in turn, dance and cavort about as if trying to prevent encirclement by the lines of dancers, occasionally careening into the line in a mock effort to break it. In return, the dancers swoop about the musicians and attempt to force them into a corner of the house or make them fall over some article of furniture. These movements are said to have no symbolic significance at present, but are merely regarded as a form of sport. When the dancing is in full swing the sport becomes rather rough, for the tipsy musicians are continually colliding with the dancers or falling over obstructions, and the centrifugal force generated in the line of dancers as it swings about often throws the end members to the ground, as in "cracking the whip." During the entire dance songs are sung. These are often extemporized on the spot. Three tunes are used throughout the area, which are set down at the end of this section. There may be other tunes, but these and variations upon them are certainly the most popular. An individual, either a man or a woman, will raise his voice in the midst of the dance music with the words of a song. Then the other dancers pick up the words and join the singing. The composers of these songs are always recognized as such, and no one would think of claiming the authorship of a song which is known to have been introduced by someone else. Certain individuals are known as ready composers of such lyrics, four examples of which are presented herewith:

1. (Composed by a woman)

karoriapo, iyao, iyao
I am going to carry you away, uncle, uncle,

1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33) 1936 SR9 Carib SR9

(Freely: Do not look into my face that way, for, if you do, I shall never be able to forget you)[1].

As the affair progresses, the participants of course become progressively influenced by the drink, which is not intrinsically very strong, but which when taken in large quantities, steadily, for several hours produces all degrees of drunkenness. Restraints which are ordinarily practised are relaxed. On the one hand, an atmosphere of good fellowship prevails, individuals borrowing goods and taking privileges which would not even be mentioned during soberer hours. On the other hand, suppressed grudges are often brought to the surface and accounts settled with blows, a form of action which is seldom taken by a sober Carib. Men and women normally are extremely modest about exposing their sexual organs, even to members of their own sex, but during a drinking spree they can be seen urinating publicly and making jokes about it. However, I have seen no example of the practise which writers on the Guiana Indians have so frequently mentioned, namely, vomiting in order to increase one's drinking capacity. As the evening wears on the more enterprising men have usually arranged trysts with girls or women. The festivities gradually die a normal death as these couples slip off to their rendezvous, leaving the remainder of the party to drop into drunken sleep.

A spree continues until the supply of drink is exhausted. This is usually two or three days, and during this time the program of activity outlined above is vigorously kept up. When the beverage supply has come to an end the participants in the spree usually get into their hammocks and spend about twenty-four hours sleeping off the effects of the orgy before returning to their own homes.

The several forms of alcoholic stimulant have been described above. Tobacco remains to be mentioned. The tobacco plants grown by the Indians are of medium size, both as to height and leaves. They are planted from seed in the fields, and seedlings are sometimes, though not invariably, replanted after they have attained a height of a few inches. The great curse of the tobacco plants is a ground worm which destroys the roots. It is believed that planting the seed during the dark of the moon is favorable

[1] The author does not have sufficient familiarity with the Carib language to vouch completely for either the transliterations or the translations of these songs, which were obtained through interpreters. They have, however, been checked with three interpreters.

1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33) 1936 SR9 Carib SR9

household, a certain amount of fidelity to each other, rearing of children) which are not required of them before marriage.

Old people, of whom there are relatively few in this society, are treated with respect, but not exaggerated deference. In fact in many respects they are considered less than complete members of society, inasmuch as they are unable to carry out many of the functions required of more vigorous members of the group. The respect for old age varies with the intelligence of the aged individual. For instance, David at Sawari is deferred to on account of his lore and skill in religious techniques; his mind is still functioning actively, and thereby he maintains his social position despite his uselessness as a hunter and laborer. He is the only aged person in Sawari, and he is by no means completely decrepit. Two very infirm old women observed by me, one at Kurasani, the other at Baramita, were unable to move from their hammocks. They were fed and treated well, but ignored in regard to the decisive actions of their respective communities. Several old men, still more or less active physically, whom I observed at various places in the area, occupied positions no better and no worse than their personalities, physical exploits, and intelligence won for them. There is no pattern of implicitly obeying old age, of consulting it with reverence, simply because of age.

The Drinking Spree. We have discussed the underlying factors which serve to hold the individuals of the group together. In an individualistic community, where everyone goes about his own business and is largely self-reliant, what mechanism is at work to remind the members of the group of their common interests? We have seen that in everyday affairs men and women may meet face to face in pairs or threes, incidentally to their daily life, but we have as yet seen no occasion on which all the members of the group come together to renew the ties that bind them into one community. If one searches for a mechanism which periodically reunites the group, a mechanism of socialization, I think it must be found in the drinking spree.[1]

Throughout the year, when the cassava can be spared for making drink, sprees are held occasionally. During the months of

[1] Certain religious functions call together the whole community, notably the supplication to the spirits for a good cassava crop (described in the section on Religion). On these occasions, however, the lay members of the settlement are merely spectators or auditors of the ritual carried on by the piaiyen.

1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33)1936 SR9 Carib SR9

527 December and January, when cassava is usually plentiful, a spree is held very frequently. During my first four weeks in Sawari, for instance, six sprees were held in the settlement. These festivities are "given" in each case by individual households for the benefit of guests. Such an arrangement is in line with the typically individualistic orientation of practically all aspects of Carib life. The women of the household which is acting as host prepare the drink and during the spree act as waitresses, serving the liquor to guests in calabash vessels. I have described the details of these jollifications in the chapter on amusements, but the important fact in the present connection is that for the persons present at one of these functions, the communal ties are strengthened at the expense of individual ties.

527 156 The Caribs are normally fairly reticent with each other concerning their personal affairs; the fundamental philosophy of "every man for himself" rules the daily life of the people; but under the benign influence of alcohol, combined with singing and dancing, much of this reserve breaks down. At these periodic jollifications the members of the group pool their feelings and interests. The following points may make this clearer. Joking and talk arise during the early stages of the spree. Much of the conversation deals with personal matters which under other circumstances would not be discussed. Individual relaxation is also seen in the communal use of articles, such as tobacco, food, hammocks, clothing, which during ordinary times are strictly private. The appropriation of other individuals' partners in adulterous connections, which occurs in the evening, although not condoned by cuckolded husbands, is approved in general and shows a merging of private interests into those of the group. A spree is usually held when a visiting party arrives in the settlement, thus exhibiting unity through extension of group hospitality. The fact that Cook and his group were eventually excluded from participation in the sprees of Miller's clearing gives visible form to the drawing of boundaries about those who "belong," and indicates the growth of a rift in settlement life. The fact that the dispute itself between Miller and Cook arose during a spree illustrates the manner in which the spree serves as a clearing house for social forces. Cook's group defends its position by holding sprees of its own

1: GillIn E-5 (1932-33) 1936 SR9 Carib SR9

from which the others are excluded, thus building up its own solidarity. 527 156

Summary. In summarizing the situation in Sawari we are justified in concluding, I believe, that the most important factors of unity are blood relationship, relationship by marriage, friendship, and economic opportunity. 182

The factors which tend to disrupt the unity of the settlement are personal dislike, insufficient economic opportunity, death, and divorce.

Leadership of the community is here based on personality, intelligence, initiative, physical ability, and relationship. Thus Miller, the headman of the whole village, was the first man to cut a field in this vicinity, thereby giving a demonstration of his initiative, physical ability, and intelligence. He attracted a group of friends and relatives about him, who on account of all these factors were willing to submit to his authority, such as it is. The same factors are seen to be at work in the off-shoot group represented by Cook's clearing with Cook as its leader. Children and youths are subordinate to adults, but among the latter such inequality as exists is based on personal factors. 554 622

Sawari, therefore, like the other Carib villages on the Barama, is a local grouping of families, united around a leader for the reasons mentioned above. No single factor is alone operative in bringing together such a group, no single factor can be said to be the exclusive cause of its disintegration.

The balance between the forces of unity and of disintegration in a Carib settlement is exceedingly delicate. The membership is continually shifting, and the life of an average settlement is apparently comparatively short. Sawari was founded perhaps ten years ago by Miller, after his sojourn in the toils of the law. It is still growing, but in a fluctuating fashion. Many of the newly married residents have been members for only a year or two. Joseph (David's son) joins the settlement, Henry (Caroline's husband) leaves in the space of a few months. It is quite likely that further additions and subtractions will take place at about this rate until the settlement for one reason or another is finally abandoned. 182

1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33) 1936 SR9 Carib SR9

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a, A typical scene during a drinking spree: a drummer sitting in his hammock while he continues to produce rhythms for the dance.

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b, Guests at a drinking spree resting in their hammocks between dances in the house of the host.

(End plate 23)

175 John Cook was probably the same age as Miller (Gillin 1936:125-8).
571 Several years ago upon the death of his first wife, he was attracted
159 to Sawari out of his friendship with Miller. He consequently took a
621 kinswoman of Miller as a wife.[1] As Cook became established in Sawari, he attracted men in his own right. As he did so, his friendship and cooperation with Miller waned. Expressive of this rift is their discontinued participation in a common cassiri spree,[2] the one form of public activity including ritualized behavior. During Gillin's visit, Cook's group ceased attending Miller's cassiri sprees but held their own. In addition to Cook, there were three men in his clearing. These included his half-brother Daniel and his half-sister's husband, Henry Daniel, who is also a fourth brother to the group of three in Miller's clearing. Also, a man named John, about thirty-five, had moved his household to Sawari on the basis of his friendship with Cook. All of these men together had cleared a field and had the use of respective plots in it.

The third clearing was that of a single man, Edwin, who was also a contemporary of Miller and Cook. Edwin farmed by himself. However, indifferent to the enmity between Miller and Cook, he assisted both of them at times with other tasks such as constructing a cassiri kanu and a woodskin boat. Gillin suggests that Edwin's failure to attract a group around him is due to his lack of leadership qualities (1936:127-128). It is also clear that Edwin at this point in time does not have the same advantage as Miller and Cook regarding marriageable female relatives with whom to negotiate these satellites. His oldest child was a male about sixteen. His other children were daughters under twelve years of age.

broker between them. At times, rivalry was evident when a worker had been suspended for two weeks, as was the standard practice for failure to turn out for a scheduled work period. The suspended man would have his wife make a batch of cassiri, and he would hold a spree for other miners who often suspected the plot but could not resist the invitation. In turn, the guests would be too inebriated to work, and the first miner would be immediately reinstated as constant workers were needed to maintain the mining enterprise.

From the pattern of social organization attending subsistence farming in the rain forest, father and son and father and son-in-law ties have been solidified by strategies to secure employment. In this case, previous nuclear families with ties of assistance among a wider kin group, effective organization for exploiting the bush, were changed by the circumstances of the availability of employment. However, the record of impermanence regarding work opportunities and other markets has contributed to a general lack of explicitness regarding work partnerships and residential practices among the Upper Barama River Carib population during the last forty years. The organization of the population with no access to steady mining employment also has been affected by the increased availability of regional exchange opportunities. This is best detailed in the discussion of the situation during 1970-71.

Resettlement around Baramita Air Strip

The current residence situation among the Upper Barama River Carib population has resulted from the pattern described by Gillin,

of external resources. Larger numbers of people have come to live near each other without immediate cooperative bonds. Visiting commonly takes place during *cassiri* sprees which now last a number of hours rather than the several days reported by Gillin (1936:65). Among neighbors, contacts depend on the inclination and personalities of the people involved. This aspect of community life is foreshadowed in the school experience[7] of the children. They are brought together in age categories to learn, play, and form relationships on an associational basis. More permanently settled in centralized locations, the Upper Barama River Carib population has become organized as a local, small-scale society within the overarching national political economy.

However, the resource base on which this population depends remains fluid. For the majority of people, external resources are not reliable. Thus, agriculture in rain forest soil remains a prerequisite for permanent settlement. The encapsulation of this population relative to transportation and communication networks and the lack of resource-storing mechanisms have already been discussed. As a consequence, the Upper Barama River Carib population utilizes all resources for the subsistence they provide. Institutional elaboration among this population is absent. Instead, the household, albeit changed in composition in some cases, has remained the primary cooperative social unit. It is the smallest unit capable of securing a livelihood in the ubiquitous rain forest. Such organization has been maintained throughout the flux in regional contacts and external resources. The continued emphasis on the individual within the household context is reflected in the kinship system.

others. That is, this population is encapsulated relative to access to regional transportation and communication and control of market opportunities. Limited regional markets including employment have been conveyed into the Upper Barama River area by non-Carib middlemen. As a consequence, a limited number of Caribs have become clients to middlemen patrons and have brought their sons or sons-in-law into an employment opportunity. In this manner, extended household organization in which a son or son-in-law and his family remain with the parents is one pattern of organization that is evident among the Upper Barama River Caribs.

There is one further note to make on the social organization of the Upper Barama River Caribs. That is, the instrumentality of the one type of local communication event has changed relative to shifts in the boundaries of the resource-sharing social unit. The cassiri spree provides for the institutionalized interaction of individuals through songs, dances, and other encounters. As Gillin observed it (1936:60-70,137-139), a spree was held by one man but participation tended to include the residents of one settlement, although strangers were usually welcomed. A program of activities was continued for several days until the supply of cassiri was exhausted. During this time individuals engaged in a formalized manner related in different ways to the people they saw almost continually. In addition, the event itself expressed the solidarity of the people participating. Less than total participation of the residents in a settlement was indicative of the strained relationships which were a prelude to the relocation of households.

2: Adams E-4,5 (1970-1971) 1973 SR9 Carib SR9
(1932-1971) Barama River

*177 • 527 182 During employment in mining, a spree lasted only a number of hours. Participation clearly crosscut resource-sharing social units. The spree served to bring together people whose daily activities tended to provide no other basis for contact. The cassiri spree was also used to gain job reinstatement in inducing other Carib miners to neglect work schedules. At Baramita Air Strip, cassiri sprees continue to bring a large number of people together in a party atmosphere for only a number of hours. It has been held to distribute food and clear up any residue of obligations for participants in a kaiyap or group work day. Also, the Amerindian Captain has [622] sponsored sprees which include all the residents of the Air Strip and coincide with national Guyanese holidays. At other times, sprees are held among neighbors. Time depth is achieved only when a number of people hold sprees more or less in succession, which might happen during a weekend. Participation is by verbal invitation and the participants at each spree vary. In the different organizational contexts, the cassiri spree has been used as a communication event for different expressions and to convey different purposes.

*177 184 594 Reports on other Carib populations affected by regional economies are available. The villagers of Cachama and Mamo in Venezuela (Schwerin 1966) and the Maroni River Caribs of Surinam (Kloos 1971) tend to be primarily organized in nuclear families. The Caribs of Cachama and the Maroni River reserve some economic ties within a larger kinship group, usually the nuclear families of parents and adult offspring, especially daughters. Families in such a group tend to live near each other. Basically, these Caribs remain